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# Generations of Excellence

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## Huntsman Fund for Faculty Excellence

By Jaime Caliendo

The greatest teachers live forever in the hearts and minds of the students whose lives they touch. With a unique capacity for understanding the way the world works and for communicating that to others, they cultivate passion, curiosity, and a pursuit of excellence that ripple throughout generations.

*Huntsman believed in the potential of people to do great things, famously comparing human beings to unborn masterpieces whose talents and abilities are recognized only after being tested.*

— David Huntsman

The late Jon M. Huntsman was a master teacher and leader whose lifelong search for solutions to impossible problems and determination to lift others continues to inspire the leaders of tomorrow. The son of a teacher, Huntsman believed in the potential of people to do great things, famously comparing human beings to unborn masterpieces whose talents and abilities are recognized only after being tested. He knew firsthand the power of education to draw out the unborn masterpiece in every individual. “My grandfather was a teacher, and my father believed that great teachers played a crucial role in the lives of young people,” notes David Huntsman, son of Jon Huntsman and President of the Huntsman Foundation.

It was this belief in the power of great teaching that led to the announcement by Huntsman and USU President Noelle Cockett of the establishment of the Huntsman Fund for Faculty Excellence on May 1, 2019. The \$15 million fund will support five endowed professorships initially, with many more professorships expected in the years to come.

Jon Huntsman envisioned creating a premier business school in the Intermountain West that would provide a world-class education at an affordable price. He recognized that such a goal would require a deep commitment of resources. The Huntsman Foundation has provided more than \$55 million to USU to support scholarships and student programs since 2007 so that USU students could, in Jon Huntsman’s words, “compete with the best and brightest anywhere in the world.”

*This is the realization of a priority articulated by my father more than 10 years ago. He began setting aside funds in 2011 for the very purpose of establishing a faculty excellence fund.*

— David Huntsman

The investment has paid off. During the last dozen years, every aspect of the Huntsman School has been completely rebuilt and professionalized with an eye toward creating programs that accelerate the potential of students. Huntsman Hall is a state-of-the-art learning facility, and programs like Huntsman Scholars and the national award-winning Small Enterprise Education and Development (SEED) broaden student perspectives with hands-on learning opportunities on a global scale. The new Fund will reinforce these efforts and compound the School’s rate of growth.

“Great education is not inexpensive. It is produced when highly motivated students, who have taken responsibility for their own futures and their own educations, interact with exceptionally well-trained faculty,” observed President Cockett during the gift announcement in May. “Jon left an amazing legacy at USU, and it will be further enhanced by the actions we are taking today.”

“This is the realization of a priority articulated by my father more than 10 years ago. He began setting aside funds in 2011 for the very purpose of establishing a faculty excellence fund,” explains Huntsman. “The highest priority of the Huntsman

School of Business is student success—to prepare today’s students with the knowledge, skills, and moral framework to go out in the world and be successful wherever they happen to be. My father was wise enough to realize that hiring top faculty was the key to that priority.”

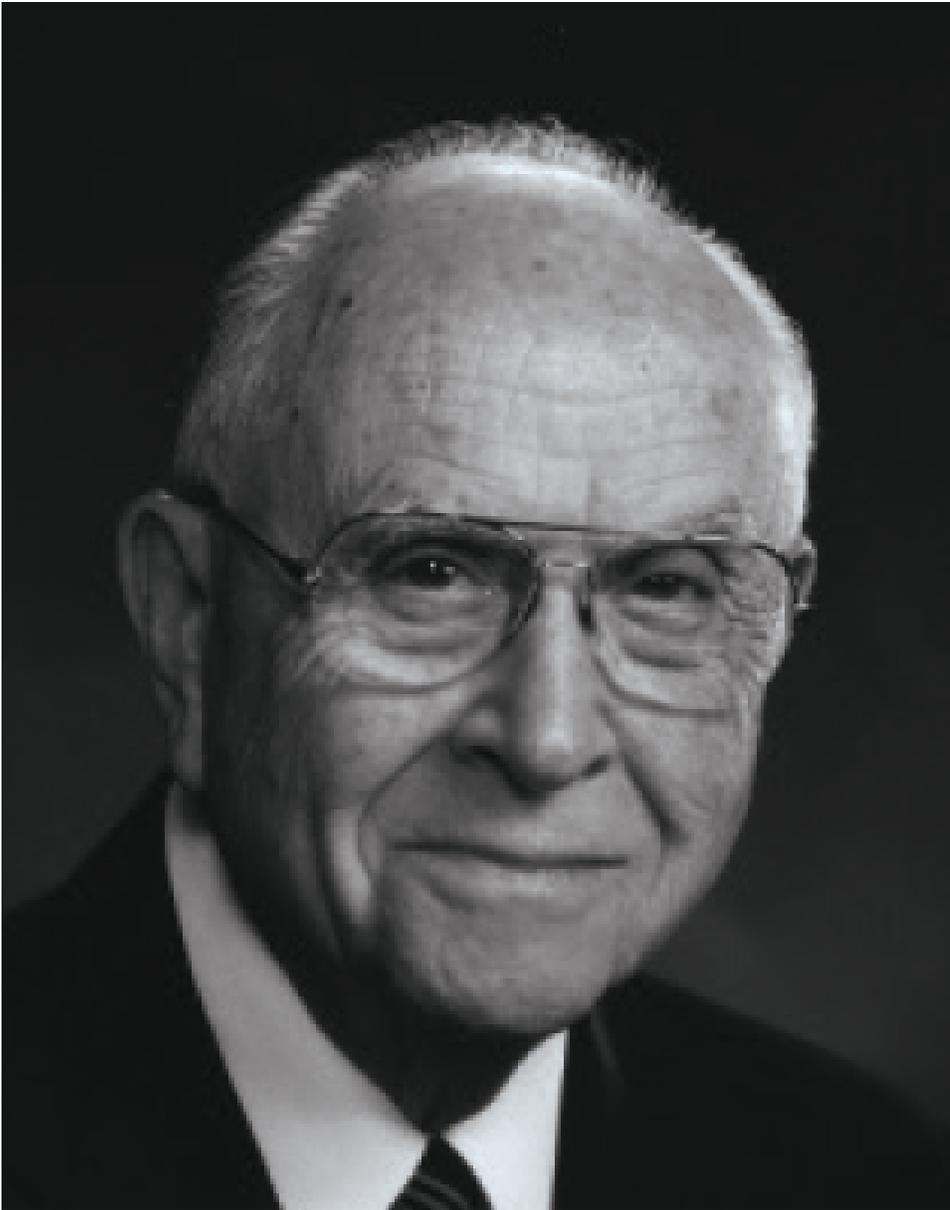
The initial five professorships are named in honor of individuals who have made meaningful contributions in business and leadership. “We hope that our students will take inspiration from their lives to go out and dare mighty things in their own spheres of influence and in the arena of public and private affairs,” says Douglas D. Anderson, Dean of the Huntsman School of Business.

The initial named professorships include:



**Karen Haight Huntsman Endowed Professor**

Named for the devoted wife of Jon Huntsman and tireless supporter of education herself, this professorship will support a female faculty in any department of the Huntsman School. A national search is currently underway to fill this professorship.



### **David B. Haight Endowed Professor of Analytics**

Named for USU alumnus and Karen Huntsman's father, this professorship will support the growing field of data analytics. Dr. Chris Corcoran, head of the Department of Management Information Systems, is the first incumbent of this professorship.

Speaking of his grandfather, David Huntsman noted that "[His studies at USU] completely transformed his life. He went on to be successful in business and in politics where he served as mayor of Palo Alto and, ultimately, he served as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. My grandfather would be an excellent role model and example for students to emulate."



### **Harry M. Reid Endowed Professor of Research**

Dr. Aaron Brough in the Department of Marketing and Strategy is the first incumbent of this professorship, named for the Senator and USU alumnus who remains a dear friend of the Huntsman family and passionate supporter of Jon Huntsman's efforts to cure cancer. David Huntsman explains, "Outside of the Huntsman family, Harry did more to raise money for the Cancer Institute here in this state than any other single individual and for that, we will always be grateful."



### **Stephen R. Covey Endowed Professor of Leadership**

Named for the leadership guru and former Huntsman Presidential Chair in Leadership who passed away in 2012, this professorship will support a faculty member who will play a significant role in the Stephen R. Covey Leadership Center and in developing leadership as a key aspect of the School. A national search is currently underway to fill this professorship.

## The Douglas D. Anderson Endowed Professor



This Professorship came as a surprise to Dean Anderson, who became aware of the official name only during the public announcement on May 1. The Huntsman family and President Cockett delighted in surprising the man who has committed his energies over the last 13 years to helping realize Huntsman's vision for the School. "In the 130-year history of the business school, no one single leader has had a greater impact on raising the heights and the expectations here," said David Huntsman. "When you think about our aspirational challenge of daring mighty things, I think Dean Anderson has done that with his bold and ambitious vision for what this business school can become, and with his tireless energy in implementing that vision." Anderson was visibly moved by the recognition. "I'm deeply humbled that the Huntsman family and President Cockett would deem it appropriate to name a professorship after me. It's deeply meaningful to me and my family, and I can't fully express my appreciation for this extraordinary honor."

At the heart of the Huntsman Fund for Faculty Excellence is the conviction that excellent faculty play a critical role in shaping students, scholarship, and the institution. Individuals who are deeply engaged in what they love inspire students and colleagues alike to redouble their efforts at personal and professional

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## 10 named professorships in the Jon M. Huntsman School of Business:

### **Douglas D. Anderson Endowed Professor**

TBA

### **Vernon and MaRee Buehler Endowed Professor**

Dr. Vijay Kannan, Management Department

Dr. James Davis, Department of Marketing and Strategy

### **Stephen R. Covey Endowed Professor of Leadership**

TBA

### **George S. Eccles Endowed Chair in Finance**

Dr. Ben Blau, Department of Economics and Finance

### **Ernst & Young Professor**

Dr. Larry Walther, School of Accountancy

### **David B. Haight Endowed Professor of Analytics**

Dr. Chris Corcoran, Department of Management Information Systems

*It's hard to describe just how significant an honor it is to me to have this appointment. When Dean Anderson first told me, I have to confess that I was kind of surprised, and got a little emotional. It feels so humbling, not only because of the academic recognition but because of the namesake of the professorship. David B. Haight was a big hero of mine when I was growing up. To have my name associated with someone of such stature and integrity makes me feel even more dedicated to doing everything I can to help the Huntsman School achieve its mission. I want to demonstrate to the Huntsman family that their significant investment in me and in my department will provide a big return for our students!*

— Chris Corcoran

### **Jon M. Huntsman Presidential Professor of Leadership**

Dr. Douglas D. Anderson, Dean, Huntsman School of Business

### **Karen Haight Huntsman Endowed Professor**

TBA

### **Bonnie B. and James H. Quigley/Deloitte Foundation Professor of Accountancy**

Dr. Lynn Rees, School of Accountancy

### **Harry M. Reid Endowed Professor of Research**

Dr. Aaron Brough, Department of Marketing and Strategy

*I think the best teachers change the way students think--not just during a particular course, but long after graduation. I want students to be resourceful and independent problem-solvers and have designed my courses to complement other courses by repeatedly exposing students to unfamiliar problems, and often tell students to avoid a myopic focus on grades, and instead focus on the bigger-picture perspective of what they can learn that will be useful to them long after graduation. One of my most rewarding experiences is hearing from former students (often those who were vocal critics of my teaching approach while they were enrolled in the class) telling me about how what they learned in my course is now helping them in their current job.*

— Aaron Brough

## Exemplifying Excellence - Jef Doyle



Few faculty members exemplify excellence in teaching and thought leadership as well as Dr. Jef Doyle. Beginning in 2006, when he joined the faculty of the School of Accountancy and held the George S. Eccles Chair in Capital Markets Research until his retirement in 2019, Dr. Doyle served with distinction in the classroom and in his field. He was recognized as the USU Teacher of the Year, Huntsman School Teacher of the Year, Researcher of the Year, and was selected to serve a one-year appointment as the Faculty Research Fellow at the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB), which establishes the standards of financial accounting that govern the preparation of financial reports by nongovernmental entities. This highly selective position is awarded to one academic annually from across the country. Perhaps more importantly, Jef's classes were consistently recognized by his students as the most difficult, yet the most rewarding.

"It was an honor to work with Professor Doyle," stated Dr. Larry Walther, Senior Associate Dean of the Huntsman School, and the former head of Accounting. "I only wished I had chronicled his daily nuggets of wisdom shared in countless hallway conversations. It would have made a great book. I know his students benefited from the same and it is one reason

he was one of our most popular and successful teachers and researchers. He was simply profound. I was humbled and honored to share a chapter in life with him.” Jef was focused on excellence, whether in the classroom, his research, or in a leadership capacity. He expected a lot from his students, and he expected a lot from himself. The Huntsman Fund for Faculty Excellence, simply put, is designed to help bring aboard more faculty like Jef Doyle. — Dave Patel, Associate Dean

excellence. Truly excellent professors and the formative experiences they create for their students share some essential features in common.

## Curiosity, Capacity, Passion

“To find the passion to sustain a full career as a member of the academy and as a professor at a university requires a combination of enormous curiosity for the subject and a passion that sustains and renews itself,” observes Anderson who, as a student at USU in the early-70s, was inspired by these traits in legendary economics professors Leonard Arrington, Reed Durtschi, Delworth Gardner, and Cris Lewis.

In particular, Reed Durtschi’s engaging, interactive, humorous, and insightful discussion of markets, pricing, and macroeconomics inspired Anderson to pursue a PhD in Economics. “Dr. Durtschi flipped a light switch in a dark room. That’s what excellent teachers do—they illuminate a path for a student and help them discover the motivation to pursue it.”

Dean Anderson continued, “The question that still fascinates me is—‘how does the world work?’” Professor Durtschi awakened him to the possibility that the study of economics could provide answers to this question, and the more he learned, the more he wanted to know. To Anderson’s surprise, teaching Introductory Economics to undergraduates at Harvard accelerated his own learning, and he was captured by the profession.

The application of this principle extends beyond classroom success.

“‘Learning how to learn’ and ‘loving to learn’ are likely two of the most important intangibles for success,” explains Dr. Ben Blau, the George S. Eccles Chair in Capital Markets in the Huntsman School, who prepares his students with the most applicable skills to understand fluctuations in markets. “We operate in a world that changes continuously. The only skill that will be relevant in 20 years is the skill to learn and apply new things.”

“Faculty excellence means setting a standard for our students, to demonstrate to them that we are willing to pay the price to stay at the forefront of our fields, and then to best share that knowledge by providing an outstanding classroom experience,” explains Chris Corcoran, the newly appointed David B. Haight Professor of Analytics.

## Focused on Student Success

From his initial appointment as Dean, Dean Anderson has been determined that student success would be the School’s top priority.

*That’s what excellent teachers do—they illuminate a path for a student and help them discover the motivation to pursue it.*

— Doug Anderson

“This has been a driving motivation for the School for more than a decade,” he explains. “The goal is to build a community of scholars and students who aspire together toward excellence where the focus is on student success as the first priority. Excellent faculty bring students into the process and make them a part of it. They light a fire within them.”

“A college education is about learning to properly frame and solve problems and to innovate,” explains Professor Corcoran. “This requires student experiences that foster the ability to communicate and collaborate, and to have the confidence and ability to seek and find the best solutions, even those that may be novel or somewhat unfamiliar.”

Dean Anderson has observed that the Huntsman School's best teachers are also some of the School's best researchers, who engage students around their academic research by sharing new insights and perspectives in the classroom. They may also create opportunities for students to participate with them in their research and gain hands-on experience.

For Aaron Brough, first incumbent of the Harry M. Reid Professor of Research, the invitation to help one of his professors with a research project was an opportunity to experience intellectual curiosity and engage in critical thinking outside the classroom that proved critical to his future success. "That experience shaped my career choices, as I have really been focused on research in one way or another ever since," says Brough, now a prolific researcher and sought-after expert in marketing.

Excellent professors are also devoted mentors who give generously of their time to listen, guide, and counsel with kindness and genuine concern for the student's success.

The mentoring efforts of Dr. Basudeb Biswas taught Professor Blau that success is about maximizing one's potential, more than simply earning a passing grade. He recalls that Professor Biswas, who taught a variety of economics courses at USU, approached him one day after a test with a concern. Although Blau performed well on the exam, Biswas sensed a need to further discuss some of the concepts. He scheduled time outside of class each week to ensure that Blau had a firm understanding of the material.

"I owe a great deal to Professor Biswas—not only for his excellent teaching both in and out of the classroom, but also for his example of setting expectations for students and then doing all he could to help his students reach those expectations," says Blau, whose love for teaching and ability to inspire has made him a favorite among finance students.

"Just a relatively small investment of time can help to instill confidence in a student that will propel them toward fulfilling their potential," says Professor Corcoran, whose math professor, Dr. Bob Heal, offered support and encouragement when Corcoran was seeking career guidance. Most importantly, Heal remained available whenever Corcoran needed advice, even after graduating from USU. "It's no exaggeration to say that his generosity and willingness to visit with me changed the course of my life." The two men remained lifelong friends, and Corcoran even served as his department head before Heal retired.

## **Limitless Potential**

"The enterprise we're engaged in is essentially one of creating and enhancing human potential. That gets done with very talented and committed people, and so the most important strategic decisions we make are who to hire and who to promote," explains Dean Anderson.

Excellent professors help students realize their potential. They have a unique ability to encourage a sense of mutual commitment to the learning enterprise, where students recognize that they own their education and that it's a jointly created product between what they do and bring to the classroom experience, and what the professor brings to the classroom experience. "Professors must be respectful of the student role in that and be excited about helping students awaken their capacity to contribute to that process," says Anderson.

Excellent professors also recognize that research and professional engagement are critical to the success of the institution because they have the potential to enhance the School's reputation and attract a greater number of talented faculty and students.

"The importance of talent is unmatched and has profound implications," says Professor Blau, who explains that an efficient labor market exists for talented individuals. Retaining high performing faculty requires a commitment of resources and produces benefits immediately. The Huntsman gift recognizes and seeks to address this challenge. By providing the resources necessary to attract and retain the best professors, as well as resources to support their research and teaching activities, the college creates an environment of excellence that will benefit both professors and students.

*Excellent faculty bring students into the process and make them a part of it. They light a fire within them.*

— Doug Anderson

Professor Corcoran encourages his students to understand that tuition is only a small part of the cost of their education. “Our students have public and private partners who are also making an enormous investment in their education,” he says. “That is inspiring to me! Students and faculty need to continually strive to achieve great things, so that we can provide the highest return possible from this investment.”

President Cockett predicts the Huntsman Fund for Faculty Excellence will be transformational for the School. “This is an extraordinary gift, fully in keeping with the vision and purpose of the School and of Jon Huntsman himself, for whom the School is named.”

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— Chris Corcoran

“The Huntsman family’s generous gifts to USU over the past decade have enabled us to continue to create an environment of remarkable opportunities for our students, so that they can personify our motto to Dare Mighty Things,” says Dean Anderson. And this is only the beginning. “We believe it’s possible that this fund will double in size in the next 10 years. We intend that it will be an engine of growth for the school over the ensuing years and become a very powerful endowment.”

David Huntsman agrees. “It is my hope that this fund will help Utah State University recruit and retain talented faculty who can have an outsize impact on students for generations to come, and thereby contribute to our community and the world.”

